

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 001512

SIPDIS

LONDON, PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/24/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PARM](#) [PHUM](#) [PNAT](#) [PBTS](#) [PINS](#) [PTER](#) [DJ](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: VISIT OF SOMALI PRESIDENT TO DJIBOUTI

Classified By: Pol/Econ Erinn C. Reed for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) Summary: Newly elected President of Somalia, Abdillahi Youssouf Ahmed, came to Djibouti for a 24-hour visit on November 15, 2004. In a press conference with Djiboutian national media during the visit, Abdillahi Youssouf touched on the conflicting relations between Somaliland and Puntland, how he intends to manage the integration of Somaliland into the new federal entity of Somalia, and his three-phase plan to restore stability to war-torn Somalia. End Summary.

12. (U) At the end of a 24-hour visit to Djibouti, new Somali President Abdillahi Youssouf Ahmed gave a press conference to Djiboutian national media. In the conference he explained his three-phase plan to return stability to Somalia: (i) disarmament, (ii) army building, and (iii) reconstruction of the country. Youssouf said he needed a foreign army to help rebuild Somalia's national military. His objective was not to put Somalia's population face-to-face with foreign forces. Rather, in order that these forces be accepted in Somalia, a Somali-speaking corps should guide them. He stated that Djibouti is closer to Somalia, and added that "we need them on our side in this mission." Responding to a question concerning what he expected from the UN Security Council (UNSC) meeting in Nairobi on November 18 to discuss Sudan and Somalia issues, he stated that the UNSC should give financial support to an African force, because the African Union is still too young to do so effectively. Youssouf reported that he will present his program to members of the UNSC and will count on the UNSC to mobilize the necessary funds. Concerning a question on what the former transitional government, created at the Arta conference in 2000, has done and whether his cabinet will take the same path, the Somali president refused to criticize the former transitional government and said he would not repeat the same errors. Instead, he highlighted the importance of reconciling people and disarmament, two things the former government failed to do. He gave himself one year to fulfill these engagements.

13. (U) On Somaliland-Puntland relations, Youssouf said the current state of relations does not please him. "I used to be President of Puntland, now I am President of Federal Republic of Somalia and my duties are to observe the laws." He added that the conflict will only be solved by dialogue. On the issue of integrating the two self-proclaimed independent regions of Somaliland and Puntland, the Somali president stated that as soon as he is settled in Somalia, he would engage in negotiations with Somaliland. He said he believed Somaliland would eventually join the federation.

14. (C) Comment: Sources said that the two presidents disagreed on the priorities of sending peacekeeping forces. Youssouf reportedly sought the support of Guelleh in his call for the international community to send forces to Somalia. Guelleh is said to have advised Youssouf that the priority was disarmament, not sending troops. He said the Somali warlords had to surrender their arms first, then African forces could come to Somalia. Guelleh also reportedly said that since many of the warlords are now parliamentarians, it would be likely that they supported the government. In addition, he highlighted the contradiction in having warlords in the government while still keeping heavily armed militias in Somalia. End Comment.

RAGSDALE